

NOAA 2002 SFA On-Line Focus Group
Preliminary Report-- Culture, Politics & Communication
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Following is an preliminary report from the committee established to summarize the results from the on-line Focus Group for Culture, Politics, and Communications. The committee is working on its report and will be meeting May 6th to complete the effort.

Ralph: You asked for a status of the politics and communications sub-committee. Last fall, John Bates, Nathalie Valette-Silver, and I (Gerald Dittberner) helped with the internet forum and analyzed over 130 responses. A summary briefing was presented to the NESDIS Diversity Council November 26, 2003. The main results are as follows.

Most traffic referred to faulty top to bottom and upwards communication. Some mentioned closing the loop, and a few talked about lateral communication. Summary of responses:

1. Top to bottom communication:
 - Often stopped at the mid-manager level
 - Lack of personal contact
 - Too many impersonal e-mails
 - Need for training managers at all levels
 - Requests for information often stripped from context about why it was important
 - Non-realistic (too rapid) deadlines
2. Upwards Communication
 - Mostly lip service to requests for input
 - No real desire to listen and incorporate employees' input
 - Always same people used
 - Not enough time allowed for reaction
3. Closing the loop
 - Never get feedback on information provided
 - Do not get final product; could use it to improve information next time

A report is being written.